

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-10 EUR-12 CU-02 AID-05

/092 W

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R 091419Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9192

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: FURTHER FMG EFFORT RESTRICT LABATT ACTIVITIES

REF: LAGOS 2253

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FURTHER MEA NOTE DATED MAY 5 REGARDING POSITION AND ACTIVITIES OF LABOR OFFICER. AFTER REFERRING TO CONVERSATION REPORTED REFTEL, NOTE SPELLS OUT MINISTRY VIEW THAT "IT IS INADMISSIBLE FOR ANY FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO HAVE FUNCTIONARIES ON ITS STAFF, APPOINTED TO DEAL WITH, OR ESTABLISH LIAISON OF ANY SORT, WITH LABOR AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE COUNTRY." NOTE THEN REQUESTS ASSURANCE OF FURTHER COMPLIANCE WITH FMG WISHES "INVIEW OF HISTORY OF PERHAPS INADVERTENT INFRACTION OF GOVERNMENT REGULATION ON THIS SUBJECT." TONE OF NOTE IS FIRM BUT ENTIRELY CORRECT.

2. CHECK MAY 8 WITH UK HIGH COMMISSION, ONLY OTHER LOCAL EMBASSY WITH DESIGNATED LABOR OFFICER, REVEALS THAT THEY HAVE HAD NO COMMUNICATION ON SUBJECT HIS ACTIVITIES. THEY NOTED HE IS ON SIX-MONTH STUDY LEAVE IN UK, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WHOLE ISSUE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY BLOW OVER BEFORE HIS RETURN IN SEPTEMBER. WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED

MATTER WITH OTHER MISSIONS, MANY OF WHICH HOWEVER HAVE FAIRLY
REGULAR CONTACTS WITH TRADE UNION LEADERS AS PART OF THEIR NORMAL
ACTIVITIES.

3. COMMENT: AS NOTED REFTEL, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL TO
PROTECT PRINCIPLE OF FREE ACCESS TO VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF NIGERIAN
SOCIETY WITHOUT MEA INTERMEDIARY. WORDING OF NOTE OFFERS POSSIBILITY
OF FURTHER TEMPORIZING REPLY, GOING ONE STEP BEYOND NOTE DESCRIBED
LAGOS 1685 BUT NOT YIELDING ON BASIC PRINCIPLE INVOLVED. WE COULD
ADVISE MEA THAT EMBASSY WILL CEASE TO HAVE DESIGNATED LABOR OFFICER
(THOUGH WE HAVE HAD ONE SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1960) FOLLOWING
IMPENDING DEPARTURE OF INCUMBENT LABATT, LEAVING UNSTATED OUR INTEN-
TION TO HAVE HIS SUCCESSOR PERFROM NORMAL LABOR/POLITICAL FUNCTIONS
WITHOUT ANY SUCH SPECIFIC TITLE.

4. EFFORT ALONG THESE LINES WOULD BUY TIME DURING WHICH FMG CONCERNNS
IN LABOR FIELD MIGHT DIE DOWN SUFFICIENTLY TO RENDER QUESTION MOOT.
WE WILL PROCEED WITH PARTICULAR CAUTION AND MAINTAIN VERY LOW PROFILE
IN CONTINUING CONTACTS IN LABOR FIELD BUT SHOULD THESE NEVERTHELESS
ATTRACT FURTHER FMG ATTENTION, EMBASSY WOULD THEN HAVE TO RAISE
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF FREE ACCESS, WHICH IT SEEMS TACTICALLY
PREFERABLE TO AVOID AT PRESENT.

5. EMBASSY PLANS DEFER REPLY UNTIL AFTER ARRIVAL AMBASSADOR
EASUM. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS DEPARTMENT MAY WISH
OFFER TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE CONTAINED STATE 60412.

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